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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505**

31 July 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Support of Ground Forces  
by the Long-Range Air Force

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. This article describes the role of long-range aviation when it is called on to support the offensive operations of the ground forces. Such long-range support in delivering nuclear strikes becomes necessary when the capabilities of the ground forces are inadequate to penetrate into the depth of enemy positions. The author elaborates on a previous article in this series but differs on the timing of long-range aviation support. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (83) for 1968.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned the

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William E. Nelson  
Deputy Director for Operations

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## Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF  
INFO. Early 1968

DATE 31 July 1974

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): The Employment of Long-Range Aviation in Support of Ground Forces

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (83) for 1968 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. The author of this article is General-Leytenant of Aviation S. Shimanskiy. This article describes the role of long-range aviation when it is called on to support the offensive operations of the ground forces. Such long-range support in delivering nuclear strikes becomes necessary when the capabilities of the ground forces are inadequate to penetrate into the depth of enemy positions. The author elaborates on a previous article in this series but differs on the timing of long-range aviation support.

End of Summary  
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Comment:

General-Leytenant S. Shimanskiy, was assigned to an unidentified Air Force academy in February 1973. He was co-author of "Actions of Front Aviation in the Initial Front Offensive in the Initial Period of War", Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought', Issue No.2 (63) for 1962 (FIRDB-312/03836-74, 4 September 1973). The SECRET version of "Military Thought" was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970.

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The Employment of Long-Range Aviation  
In Support of Ground Forces  
by  
General-Leytenant of Aviation S. Shimanskiy

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The problems in the employment of long-range aviation in support of ground forces require a thorough and very detailed examination. Many interesting and useful thoughts on the subject are expressed in an article by General-Mayor of Aviation V. Barkovskiy.<sup>\*</sup> We would like to elaborate and amplify somewhat a few of his ideas.

In our opinion, long-range aviation may have to be used in support of ground forces because of the need to deliver powerful nuclear strikes against the deepest enemy targets in the zone of the offensive of the front operating on the main axis, and especially against those targets which cannot be effectively destroyed by front forces and means.

It is a known fact that modern front offensive operations can be conducted in a zone 400 to 500 kilometers wide and 1,000 kilometers or more in depth. A significant number of major enemy targets will be located in such a large area.

The capabilities of the forces and means of fronts (and of the navy on a maritime axis) to reliably destroy enemy targets throughout the depth of front operations will frequently prove to be inadequate. They will have to be reinforced by powerful and long-range forces and means, which include, first of all, large units of long-range aviation. The utilization of the latter in support of offensive operations of fronts will have to be planned for in advance and, consequently, their tasks will also be assigned them on the eve of the operation. Therefore, it is hardly possible to agree with the author in the article mentioned earlier that large units of long-range aviation, in the majority of cases, will have to operate during an operation against targets which were not planned for them beforehand.

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<sup>\*</sup> Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. No. 2 (81), 1967.

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In principle, we share the author's point of view that large units (units) of long-range aviation will operate directly in support of ground forces according to the plan of the troop commanders of the fronts after completion of the first air operation and sometimes, even during it. But we consider it advisable to define specifically the time of its use. ✓

First of all, it must be noted that fronts, of course, are interested in having long-range aviation give them support right from the beginning of military operations. But on the first day of the operation, long-range aviation will operate in accordance with the plan for the use of strategic nuclear forces. Therefore, it is doubtful whether it is possible to bring in long-range aviation immediately at this time in support of offensive operations of ground forces (i.e., in accordance with the plan of the troop commanders of the fronts). The close of the second or third day of the operation should obviously be considered a more realistic time to use it. ✓ And this is the time of the greatest need for long-range aviation in support of fronts. This is explained by the fact that in the course of two days, the front aviation bases may fall behind somewhat and front aviation may suffer a certain reduction in its combat capabilities; meanwhile, the enemy can reinforce his aviation and rocket groupings, unload and concentrate his troops, move up his strategic reserves, carry out amphibious and airborne landings, etc.

It is necessary, it seems to us, to speak more definitely also about the resources of long-range aviation allocated to the fronts. The major criterion in determining these resources, obviously is the number of major enemy targets in the zone of the advance of troops which are located beyond the range of front forces and means, and also the importance of the tasks being carried out by the troops of the fronts in a strategic operation in a theater of military operations.

According to calculations made by us for the most favorable conditions, it is advisable that the resources of long-range aviation allocated to a front operating on the main axis consist of 6 to 8 regimental flights using 18 to 20 nuclear munitions and chemical and conventional means of destruction. These forces and means are capable of destroying up to one army corps of the strategic reserves, the delivery aircraft at 6 to 8 airfields, 2 or 3 command posts of large formations, 2 or 3 missile launching sites, and 2 or 3 depots of nuclear munitions. ✓

All the following tasks will be accomplished according to the plans for the use of long-range aviation as a whole: combat with enemy amphibious landings in areas of loading and boarding transports and during their sea

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passage; actions against ship groupings; the neutralization of airborne landing forces in their areas of concentration; and the destruction of military-transport aviation on their airfields.

The successful fulfilment of tasks by long-range aviation in support of offensive operations of ground forces demands its close coordination with the front troops. Here it is necessary to coordinate: the procedure of support of large air units and units with the actions of other forces while overcoming enemy air defenses, and also with material-technical means in case aircraft land on the airfields of the air army; the procedure for the exchange of information, communications, and mutual identification; and the time and areas for the delivery of nuclear strikes. In addition, it is necessary to report the forecast of radiation conditions in the flight zone of long-range aviation. ✓

The basis of coordination is the plan of the troop commanders of the fronts. The coordination will be determined by the nature of the targets and the time schedule for their destruction, the time combat actions are to take place (day or night), and by the depth at which the targets of the strike are located. When strikes are delivered by aviation against targets located beyond the range of the forces and means of the fronts, coordination will be primarily on questions of the support of its actions. When strikes are delivered by aviation against enemy targets located within the range of the forces and means of fronts, coordination takes place on the targets of the strike, the time and routes of flight, the exchange of reconnaissance information, and on questions of control and comprehensive support. In all cases of the organization of coordination, particular attention should be given to measures to assure that long-range aviation overcomes enemy air defense systems on flight routes and in the target area.

It is advisable that the control of the forces of long-range aviation allotted to fulfil the tasks in accordance with the plan of the troop commanders of fronts be carried out in a centralized manner from the command post of the commander of long-range aviation or of the commander of the independent bomber corps (OTBAK). The responsibility of the long-range aviation operations group (which is best located at the command post of the commander of the front air army) is to maintain continuous coordination and to assure the effective use of the forces and means of long-range aviation allocated in support of front troops.

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In conclusion, we shall note the following. If during the course of an offensive operation, a request from the front command post necessitates

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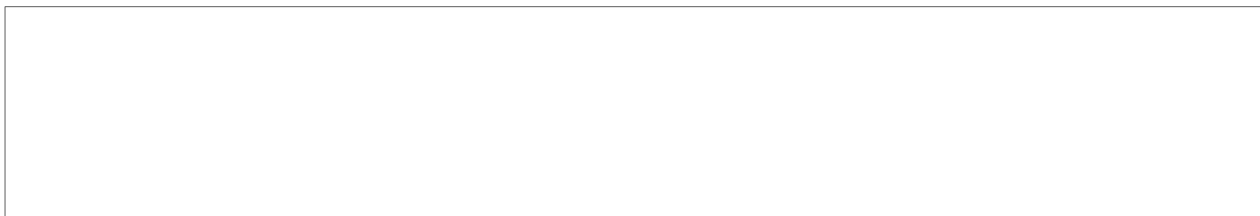
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the delivery of a strike by long-range aviation within a limited amount of time against a newly detected important target, then, in such cases (based on the experience of operational and combat training of troops), the tasks must be allotted to the unit (subunit) of long-range aviation no later than 2 to 3 hours before the strike. Sometimes the tasks can be clarified in the air after a raid, but in this case it is necessary to allot them no later than 40 to 50 minutes before the weapons are used.

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